UNITED NATIONS

Framework Convention on Climate Change

Distr.
GENERAL

FCCC/SBI/2001/INF.11*
28 October 2001

ENGLISH ONLY

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION
Fifteenth session
Marrakesh, 29 October – 6 November 2001
Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I TO THE CONVENTION

REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF EXPERTS TO THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Consolidated report of Parties' views on the preliminary report of the Consultative Group of Experts, and on the current progress of the process aiming at the improvement of guidelines for subsequent national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), at its fourteenth session, invited Parties to submit views on the preliminary report of the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) (FCCC/SBI/2001/8) and on the current progress of the process aiming at the improvement of guidelines for subsequent national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) by 15 September 2001 (FCCC/SBI/2001/9, para. 22 (b)). Twelve Parties (Australia; Belgium, on behalf of the European Community and its member States; Brazil; China; Georgia; Kenya; Lebanon; the Republic of Moldova; Samoa, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States; Switzerland; Thailand and the United States of America) submitted views in response to this invitation.

2. The SBI requested the secretariat to prepare a consolidated report on Parties' views on these issues for consideration at its fifteenth session.

---

* Reissued for technical reasons.

GE.*200*070765*
ENG

B. Scope

3. Information in this report is presented in four sections. Section II provides a summary of general comments on the preliminary report of the CGE, and on the current progress of the process aiming at the improvement of guidelines for subsequent national communications from non-Annex I Parties. Section III summarizes the views expressed by Parties on various thematic areas of the national communications as contained in the preliminary report of the CGE. Section IV encapsulates the views expressed by Parties on the current progress of the process aimed at improving the UNFCCC guidelines; the frequency of submission of national communications from non-Annex I Parties and the future work of the CGE.

II. GENERAL COMMENTS

4. Parties noted that the preparation and submission of national communications is a key obligation of all Parties to the Convention and welcomed the opportunity to submit views on the preliminary report of the CGE, and on the current progress of the process aiming at the improvement of guidelines for subsequent national communications from non-Annex I Parties. They acknowledged that substantial progress had been made by the CGE within a relatively short period of time (June 2000 to March 2001) in addressing its terms of reference and in producing a comprehensive report covering all relevant aspects of national communications from non-Annex I Parties. Georgia observed that non-Annex I countries with economies in transition were not invited to contribute to the current process and suggested that those Parties should be given the opportunity to participate in the future work of the CGE.

5. Australia and Switzerland reported on the financial and technical assistance they had provided towards the implementation of the work programme of the CGE.

6. Parties expressed appreciation to the UNFCCC secretariat for its support to the CGE in the discharge of its mandate.

III. PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF EXPERTS

7. Parties provided diverse views on the thematic areas of the CGE report, namely: national circumstances; national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories; vulnerability and adaptation assessments; GHG abatement analysis; education, training and public awareness; support programmes; financial and technical assistance; and recommendations for the improvement of IPCC methodologies and other models.

A. National circumstances

8. Most Parties agreed with the recommendation of the CGE regarding the scope of information to be reported under national circumstances as contained in paragraphs 192 and 193 of its report. Samoa, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), suggested that non-Annex I Parties should be encouraged to provide detailed information on their national circumstances and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, to the extent that their capacities allowed.

9. Brazil proposed that information recommended by the CGE for inclusion under national circumstances relating to energy, transport, industry, mining, waste, agriculture, forest, and land

use should preferably be reported under national greenhouse gas inventories, and those on tourism, health and environment should be provided under vulnerability and adaptation assessment. Information on education and research might be included either in the section on research and systematic observation or education, training and public awareness.

B. National greenhouse gas inventories

10. Most Parties provided views on the CGE recommendations relating to the improvement of activity data and emission factors, IPCC methodologies and other models, and the UNFCCC guidelines relating to national greenhouse gas inventories.

Activity data and emission factors

11. Kenya, commenting on the problems relating to the preparation of national GHG inventories outlined in paragraphs 38 to 46 of the CGE report, indicated that many of those problems had already been identified in an earlier workshop.[1] It suggested that the problems still persisted because project concepts on activity data and emission factors had not been developed by non-Annex I Parties with the financial support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as had been requested by the SBI (FCCC/SBI/1999/14, para. 51 (g) and (h)). Lebanon and Samoa, on behalf of AOSIS, endorsed the findings of the CGE (paragraphs 50 to 52) and emphasized the need to improve data collection in a number of sectors, including transport, agriculture and energy, and to facilitate processing, archiving and updating inventory data on a continuous basis.

IPCC methodologies and other models

12. Parties acknowledged that the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories provided a good basis for estimating national GHG emissions. Furthermore, Australia, Lebanon and Switzerland suggested that some aspects of the Guidelines should be revised, particularly in the land-use change and forestry sector, as well as in the energy, agriculture and waste sectors, in order to reflect better the conditions of non-Annex I Parties.

13. Australia also noted that the development of the IPCC Emission Factor Database and training in and elaboration of the IPCC Good Practice Guidance and Uncertainty Management might help to improve the inventories relating to land-use change and forestry, while Switzerland stressed that that might also improve the quality of GHG inventories in the second national communications of non-Annex I Parties.

UNFCCC guidelines

14. With regard to the recommendations of the CGE for the improvement of the UNFCCC guidelines on national greenhouse gas inventories as contained in paragraphs 192 to 203 of the CGE report, Brazil was of the view that recommendations for the review of guidelines should be based only on information contained in national communications and not on views expressed at the CGE workshops.

---

[1] UNFCCC Expert Workshop on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, Accra, Ghana, August 1999.

15. The Republic of Moldova and Switzerland agreed with the CGE recommendation to encourage non-Annex I Parties to use the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories in estimating their national GHG emissions, while China suggested that there should be sufficient flexibility for non-Annex I Parties to use either the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines or the 1995 IPCC Guidelines for National GHG Inventories in estimating their national GHG emissions.

16. While the Republic of Moldova supported the recommendation of the CGE to replace table II of the UNFCCC guidelines with the IPCC summary table 7A for summary reporting (paragraph 197 of the CGE report), Brazil and China objected to such replacement. Brazil argued that, owing to the lack of country-specific activity data and appropriate emission factors, such replacement would not necessarily improve the completeness of reporting and the quality of inventories (paragraph 194 of the CGE report), while China indicated that the use of the IPCC summary table 7A would be difficult for many non-Annex I Parties, arguing that information on perfluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride and the GHG precursor non-methane volatile organic compounds would not be readily available in those countries.

17. The Republic of Moldova agreed with the CGE recommendation that non-Annex I Parties should be encouraged to report on hydrofluorocarbon emissions (paragraph 201 of the CGE report), while Brazil opposed that view and argued that those emissions were insignificant in most non-Annex I countries. Brazil also disagreed with the recommendation to encourage Parties to present their GHG emissions and removals in carbon dioxide equivalents using global warming potentials and argued that that was not required by Article 12 of the Convention.

18. The United States of America recommended that inventory guidelines for non-Annex I Parties should be compatible with the common reporting format of Annex I Parties in order to facilitate compilation and synthesis of aggregate GHG information.

Financial and technical assistance

19. Samoa, on behalf of AOSIS, emphasized the need to ensure continuity and consistency of efforts in GHG inventory preparation through the strengthening of national mechanisms for such activities.

C. Vulnerability and adaptation assessment

20. Most Parties, endorsing the recommendations contained in paragraphs 69 to 70 of the CGE report, observed that adaptation to climate change was a priority for many non-Annex I Parties.

21. In the light of the high priority placed on climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessments by many non-Annex I Parties, Samoa, on behalf of AOSIS, reiterated its request to hold a workshop on adaptation in the last quarter of 2001 and report on its results to future sessions of the SBI (FCCC/SBI/2001/L.1)

IPCC methodologies and other models

22. Australia, commenting on the recommendations for improvement of the IPCC methodologies and other models, indicated that the provision of easily understood methods, tools

and technical guidelines (paragraph 187 of the CGE report) was essential for vulnerability and adaptation assessments by non-Annex I Parties.

UNFCCC guidelines

23. Samoa, on behalf of AOSIS, stressed the need for a scientifically based, country-driven approach to vulnerability and adaptation assessments, with a set of reporting elements that would provide a basis for comparison.

24. Many Parties expressed the need for clearer guidance to be given to non-Annex I Parties on information on vulnerability and adaptation assessments for inclusion in their national communications. In this context, Switzerland supported the recommendation of the CGE to revise the guidelines annexed to decision 10/CP.2, in order to provide an appropriate framework for reporting on vulnerability and adaptation assessments. Furthermore, Belgium, on behalf of the European Community and its member States, and China, endorsed the recommendation by the CGE to develop and include a separate section on vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in national communications (paragraph 206 of the CGE report).

Financial and technical assistance

25. Brazil, while supporting the inclusion of a separate section on vulnerability and adaptation assessment in national communications, suggested that the provision of such information should not be mandatory and that additional financial support would be needed by Parties wishing to provide such information.

26. Brazil, Kenya and Lebanon noted that most of the problems identified in the CGE report related to lack of data, financial resources and the capacity to undertake the assessments (paragraphs 74 to 77 of the CGE report). They suggested that additional financial and technical assistance was needed to improve impact models and socio-economic scenarios for integrated vulnerability and adaptation assessments.

D. Greenhouse gas abatement analysis

27. Samoa, on behalf of AOSIS, reported on the attempts of those States to reduce GHG emissions through measures that promoted sustainable development in the energy, agriculture, forestry and waste management sectors despite the apparent low level of GHG emissions from those sectors.

UNFCCC guidelines

28. Most Parties agreed with the recommendation of the CGE that GHG abatement analysis should be evaluated in the context of sustainable development (paragraph 189 of the CGE report). China, while supporting that recommendation, stressed that information on mitigation analysis and the development of mitigation projects should be reported on a voluntary basis.

29. Brazil indicated that mitigation analysis should take into account the clean development mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol.

Financial and technical assistance

30. Brazil stressed that additional financial and technological resources would be needed by some non-Annex I Parties in order to implement abatement measures.

E. Education, training and public awareness

31. Kenya stressed the importance of education, training and public awareness in addressing climate change concerns at the national level and recommended that those issues should be adequately addressed in enabling activity projects (paragraphs 104 to 118 of the CGE report).

F. Support programmes

32. Switzerland and Lebanon recognized the importance of programmes that facilitated and provided financial and technical support (paragraphs 133 to 145 of the CGE report) to non-Annex I Parties in maintaining and enhancing national expertise and ensuring that there was continuous improvement of national communications from non-Annex I Parties. In this light, Lebanon recommended that the work of the National Communications Support Programme should be continued in order to provide technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties.

G. Financial and technical assistance

33. Parties acknowledged that the level of funding for the preparation of national communications by non-Annex I Parties was not commensurate with the needs of non-Annex I Parties (paragraph 145 of the CGE report). Kenya and Thailand recommended that the GEF should consider increasing its level of funding for the preparation of national communications. In addition, China noted that there were many difficulties faced by non-Annex I Parties in using the current UNFCCC guidelines, and suggested that the provision of adequate financial resources might help non-Annex I Parties to improve their ability to apply the guidelines for the preparation of national communications.

34. Brazil, commenting on the recommendations made by the CGE on UNFCCC guidelines relating to national GHG inventories, indicated that the implementation of many of those recommendations could increase the cost of preparing the inventories.

35. Samoa, on behalf off AOSIS, stressed that continued funding for the preparation of national communications was essential for maintaining the national teams that had been established to prepare national communications and facilitate the integration of climate change concerns into national policies.

H. Improvement of IPCC methodologies and other models

36. Belgium, on behalf of the European Community and its member States, endorsed the recommendations for the improvement of IPCC methodologies and other models, and further suggested that the IPCC should take into account the recommendations of the CGE in developing and prioritizing its future work plan.

IV. CURRENT PROGRESS OF THE PROCESS AIMING AT THE IMPROVEMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR SUBSEQUENT NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM NON-ANNEX I PARTIES

A. Revision of the UNFCCC guidelines

37. All Parties were in agreement that the UNFCCC guidelines should be revised, but differed strongly on when the revision should commence.

38. Brazil, China, and Thailand argued that decision 8/CP.5 called for the review of the guidelines based on information contained in a representative and meaningful number of national communications from non-Annex I Parties. In their view, the 51 national communications from non-Annex I Parties considered by the CGE did not necessarily constitute a representative and meaningful number of national communications and therefore it would be premature to substantially revise the guidelines when the majority of non-Annex I Parties were still in the process of preparing their initial national communications. Samoa, on behalf of AOSIS, also supported the view that it would be more prudent to obtain a more representative cross-section of initial national communications before embarking on a full-scale revision of guidelines which could be pre-emptive and judgemental.

39. Australia, Belgium, on behalf of the European Community and its member States, the Republic of Moldova, Switzerland and the United States of America argued that revision of the guidelines should commence at COP 7 since, in their view, the CGE had produced sufficient information on the issues, constraints and problems faced by non-Annex I Parties in the preparation of national communications. In addition, the United States of America pointed out that the revised guidelines would enable the GEF to fund second national communications from non-Annex I Parties after COP 7.

40. Australia further suggested that the CGE should prepare draft amendments of the guidelines for consideration by the COP at its seventh session, while the United States of America suggested that the SBI should request the secretariat to prepare draft guidelines for the second national communications of non-Annex I Parties for consideration by the SBI at its sixteenth session.

41. Brazil expressed the view that the CGE had been established with the purpose of improving the process of preparing national communications from non-Annex I Parties and that the revision of the guidelines for the preparation of national communications was not the responsibility of the expert group.

B. Frequency of submission of national communications by non-Annex I Parties

42. With respect to paragraph 2 of decision 8/CP.5, the United States of America suggested that non-Annex I Parties should submit their national communications every three years and provide national greenhouse gas inventories on an annual basis in order to enable GEF support for the maintenance and reporting of greenhouse gas inventory information to continue.

C. Future work of the CGE

43. In relation to the future work of the CGE, China, Kenya, Lebanon and Thailand considered that it was necessary for the CGE to continue its work to improve the preparation of national communications by non-Annex I Parties that were still in the process of such preparation.

44. Thailand noted that the task of the CGE related to coordination among support programmes that facilitate and support the preparation of national communications was not sufficiently addressed, and therefore recommended that the CGE should give further consideration to that question so as to avoid duplication of efforts in the assistance that those programmes provided to non-Annex I Parties.

45. Australia and Switzerland were of the view that the report provided a sound analysis of barriers and difficulties encountered by non-Annex I Parties in preparing their national communications and recommended that the CGE should also take into account the results of COP 6, part two. Australia further recommended that the CGE should also provide recommendations on how assistance to countries that were in the process of preparing their national communications could be made more effective, and examine its effectiveness, cost and ease of implementation in order to help set priorities for consideration by the subsidiary bodies.

Terms of reference of the CGE

46. Samoa, on behalf of AOSIS, supported the view that the CGE should continue its work and suggested that the Group could be used as a resource for providing additional assistance to non-Annex I Parties in preparing their first and second national communications. It further suggested that the CGE could encourage the development of common methodologies for the energy, agriculture, forestry and waste management sectors, as well as methodologies appropriate for particular groups of non-Annex I Parties.

47. Belgium, on behalf of the European Community and its member States, suggested that the CGE mandate could be extended to include the provision of technical advice on the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action and that the composition of the CGE should be amended to enhance the representation of the least developed countries.

48. The United States of America recommended that the terms of reference of the CGE should be reconsidered at the same time as the adoption of the revised guidelines and the schedule for submission of second national communications at COP 8.

Funding

49. Switzerland highly appreciated the work of the CGE and recommended that funding of the activities of the CGE should be done through the core budget of the Convention secretariat.

- - - - -